July 11, 2007

The Need for A New Direction in Iraq

The Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act

- This week, the House will have an opportunity to reaffirm its support for a new direction in Iraq, involving the responsible redeployment of our troops and a refocusing of our efforts on protecting Americans from terrorism.

- The Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act [HR 2956]:

    o Requires a responsible redeployment of U.S. troops beginning within 120 days of enactment and ending by April 1, 2008.

    o Requires the President to publicly justify the post-redeployment missions for the US military in Iraq and the minimum number of troops necessary to carry out those missions.

- This bill is consistent with the advice of military and foreign policy experts, ensures the safety of our men and women in uniform, addresses our commitment to fighting terrorism, and reflects the will of the American people.

- <u>Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton, author of the Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act, says:</u>

    "A change in course in Iraq is overdue. We must begin the responsible redeployment of our forces from Iraq. The strength of the American military depends on its readiness which is currently depleted after four years in the middle of a deteriorating sectarian conflict. Our military must transition to a limited presence that protects enduring American interests and restores the readiness of our forces."

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In the face of **mounting evidence** that progress is not being made in Iraq—and **mounting criticism** from military leaders, defense experts, Republican and Democratic Members of Congress, and the American people—the President continues to urge continued support for a failed policy that is not making America safer or supporting our troops.

Mounting Evidence of Failure

- Just this week, the Bush Administration began to lower expectations for its progress report required by Congress by July 15, 2008. While our troops have performed heroically in Iraq, the Administration is conceding <u>violence remains high</u>, the <u>Iraqi government has failed to meet any of the benchmarks</u> endorsed by the President in January, and <u>political reconciliation is non-existent.</u>

- Just this week, the National Security Network reported that <u>since the President announced his "surge" policy six months ago</u>, more than 25,000 troops have been sent to Iraq, approximately <u>600 have been killed and more than 3,000 have been wounded</u>.

Mounting Criticism Failed Policy in Iraq

- Military leaders have spoken forcefully. Lt. General Odom made the case on April 28th of this year: "No effective new strategy can be devised for the United States until it begins withdrawing its forces from Iraq. Only that step will break the paralysis that now confronts us."

- Joining <u>Senator Dick Lugar (R-IN)</u>, more of the President's allies in Congress have spoken out. <u>Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM)</u> says: "There's no reason to wait… [I am] trying to tell [Bush] that he must change his ways because there is nothing positive happening." <u>Senator Elizabeth Dole (R-NC)</u> says: "It is my firm hope and belief that we can start bringing our troops home in 2008." <u>Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN)</u> says: "The president needs a new strategy."

- Just this week, in a USA Today/Gallup Poll, **more than 70% of Americans favor removal of almost all U.S. troops from Iraq by April 2008, leaving a limited number for counter-terrorism efforts**.

- Just this week, a new <u>Congressional Research Service</u> report finds that the increase in troop levels in Iraq has increased the cost of the war there from $8 billion a month to <u>$10 billion a month</u>, higher than the Pentagon's estimates. The CRS report notes that the war in Iraq has already cost $450 billion.